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LAW

DECORATION FOR COURT ROOM, FEDERAL BUILDING, CLEVELAND, OHIO

EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD

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A SIGNIFICANT MURAL PAINTING

EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD'S DECORATION FOR THE UNITED STATES
COURT HOUSE AT CLEVELAND, OHIO

BY ELISABETH LUTHER CARY.

WHEN Mr. La Farge undertook the decoration of Trinity Church, Boston, a work that, according to Mr. Isham, marks the beginning of true decorative painting in this country, he treated his problem as a whole and no particular bit of color or form was considered except in its relation to the whole scheme. This, of course, is now generally recognized as of the essence of successful and impressive decoration, but at that time it was an innovation.

Since that day a school of decorative painters has risen whose common knowledge of the fundamental requirements of painting that is to ornament architecture unites them, while their personal aims and methods are as divergent as possible. Frequently they are asked to work together in the decoration of our public buildings and their ability to do so without producing an effect of disparate intentions is a telling sign of the competency at which they have arrived. The ingenuity, too, with which they are adapting their decorative compositions to the quite special architectural

forms in this country—frequently to buildings of steel construction without columns and demanding delicacy and lightness of line and color, proves that they are quite equal to meeting new conditions and to working out a distinctively national style of decorative painting which, if sufficiently developed and encouraged, will be one of the glories of the nation, as the decorative art of France under Louis XIV and his successors is one of the glories of that country.

Edwin H. Blashfield is an artist whose work in mural painting is distinguished by just the characteristics that one would wish to see prevail in our national accomplishment in this kind; measure, that is, and refinement, intellectual taste, and, above all, perfect clarity of conception. Nothing in his decorations is brought to confusion because it has not been beautifully thought out with reference to the place and the space it is to occupy. His line, however incidental and unconsidered it may seem, invariably weaves his design together in a subtle linear pattern, and his color, although to a less degree,

plays a structural part in his composition.

In his recent decoration for the United States Court House at Cleveland, Ohio, he adds a new quality to this admirable equipment, or, to speak with greater precision, a quality that appeared in his early pictures and of late has been suppressed, perhaps in the effort toward that composure and balance which are indispensable to the dignity of mural decoration, a quality for which spiritual fervor is as good a designation as any, perhaps.

His subject is "Law." The central figure symbolizes the power of the Law,

the Suppliant at her knees, the Advocate in his black robes, the Angels in the background in gleaming white, the impressive figures of the Law Givers of history, the group of Evil Doers in the foreground, combine in a thoroughly architectonic arrangement and also convey a direct and interesting idea. No description of the composition serves, however, to evoke the impression given by the action of the individual figures and by the force of the drawing throughout of this imprisoned ardor, expressing itself through forms of singular simplicity, beautiful abstractions that nevertheless are emotive with inner fire.

THE MEDITERRANEAN

BY ELMER E. GARNSEY

ATHENA'S sea, all gemmed with flashing foam,
 Thine island-cinctured realm, Poseidon,
 Sea of the Greeks who built the Parthenon,
 Ulysses' sea, surge-roving to his home,
 Sea furrowed by the clanging fleets of Rome.
 The planets' mirror, burnished by the sun,
 Kissed by the moon who clasped Endymion,
 With temples rimmed, and girt with tower and dome.

Of thee was Beauty born, and she is thine,
 Carved in thy marbles, builded by thy shore;
 Thy billows weave the maze of sinuous line,
 Enmeshed in thee is magic color's store;
 Art has no country, yet its coasts divine
 Thy tides of beauty lave, forevermore.